Royal Academy of Music

Principal - Sir A. C. MACKENZIE, Mus.D., LL.D., D.C.L., F.R.A.M.

REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS

AT THE

ANNUAL

Distribution of Prizes

AT

QUEEN'S HALL,

ON

FRIDAY, 21ST JULY, 1916.

The Royal Academy of Music.

The Annual Distribution of Prizes to the pupils of the Royal Academy of Music took place on Friday, July 21st, 1916, at Queen's Hall, Langham Place, the numerous awards being presented to the successful students by Mrs. Threlfall. On her arrival Mrs. Threlfall was received by R. H. Horton-Smith, Esq., K.C. (Vice-President), Sir Edward E. Cooper (Chairman of Committee of Management), Sir Alexander Mackenzie, Mus. Doc. (Principal), accompanied by a deputation from the Governing Bodies of the Academy.

Among those present were Professor Sir James Dewar, LL.D., F.R.S., Charles Mortimer, Esq., J.P., Ernest Mathews, Esq., Frederick George Fitch, Esq. (Hon. Treasurer), Frederick Corder, Esq. (Curator), Edward W. Nicholls, Esq., Frederic King, Esq., Hon. R.A.M., Tobias Matthay, Esq., F.R.A.M., H. Wessely, Esq., Hon. R.A.M., J. A. Creighton, Esq. (Secretary), and P. Quarry, Esq. (Hon. Acting-Secretary).

A bouquet of choice carnations was presented to Mrs. Threlfall by Miss Eileen Bowen, one of the junior students, while a friend accompanying Mrs. Threlfall and Lady Mackenzie were also the recipients of bouquets at the hands of Miss Muriel Arnold and Miss Edna Towel respectively.

Selections of music were performed by the students, the programme being as follows:—

Ancient Scots Tunes { "Lett never crueltie" / "Honest Luckie" } ... *Mackenzie*

The Ensemble Class.

Songs ... { "Back o' the moon" / "Dream o' nights" } ... *Eric Coates*

Miss Marjorie Asher Perkins.
(Ada Lewis Scholar.)
Accompanist—Miss Elsie Cooper.

Romance ... ... *York Bowen*

Minuet (on the "Londonderry Air") ... .. *Eric Coates*

The Ensemble Class.

Conductor of the Ensemble Class—Frederick Corder, F.R.A.M.

The Principal, who was received with applause, then delivered his annual address. He said: Ladies and Gentlemen,—It is certainly not any shortage of matter which prompts me to brevity to-day. Rather be it understood that the Session we are now concluding has been the fullest, in many respects, and for causes which none of us care to dwell on, the most exacting and difficult, within the longest and ripest experience here. But seeing that the burden is common to all, is shared with every other public institution, and presses even more heavily upon some of these, so far from murmuring the Academy may well be congratulated upon the exceptionally kindly terms in which fortune seems disposed to deal with it in these anxious and grisly times. You need but look beyond and around me to realise that there is no exaggeration in this statement. True, as the Bard says, "A soul feminine saluteth us." (Laughter.) But here, in larger or smaller measure, it always did. Why a greater preponderance prevails to-day one need hardly ask or answer. Every fit student or professor has responded to the call. With the remaining few "unacceptability" is a somewhat sore subject, and to be avoided. Of the original clerical staff but one remains, and that one, Mr. Alger Bell, came back after doing his duty well at home and also in France. (Applause.) And our Secretary, Mr. Creighton, now for some time in the Navy, will when he returns to his post no doubt let us all have a taste of that breezy discipline which prevails in that branch of the Service. (Applause.) Meanwhile, his friend, Mr. Quarry, has been giving most willing and valuable assistance as Honorary Acting-Secretary, for which we very much thank him. (Applause.)

It would seem as if a silent general agreement has been arrived at between teacher, student, and official that the good repute of the school shall not suffer, and it is chiefly owing to that combined effort, and, by the way, the excellent assistance of the female substitutes in our office, that the management has been enabled to cope with necessarily-increased demands upon its energy and care during the past twelve months. (Applause.) All within our means had to be done to allow absent students to resume their Scholarships and Exhibitions when the time arrives to welcome their return, and every possible and liberal arrangement made to ease the minds of those who have temporarily relinquished their posts. The Committee, therefore, fully cognisant of its many obligations, had to be alert and quick in its decisions, from day to

day sometimes, if these were to be helpful to the general well-being and credit of the Academy. Let me frankly say that our chief encouragement has been to witness the steady determination to profit by the excellent tuition of the professors, and the unbroken cheerfulness of spirit which has reigned among the students just at a moment when such support is of greatest value and significance. In none of these respects have they failed us. Even the terrors of the annual inquisition have been endured with unusual equanimity, and I believe sincerely that at no previous period have better or more decisive results been achieved.

The " sharp point of remembrance " bids me pause to think of the removal of some of our very precious friends, who claim much more than the passing, inadequate reference which can now be given. By the death of Lord Alverstone the Academy suffers the loss of one to whose personal and keen interest it was profoundly indebted. Until the last illness overtook him, his invaluable counsel prevailed, and was always at our service. And who does not sincerely miss one of the most prominent figures among the truest lovers of music in our day? Unfortunately, the number of our Directors was further diminished by the untimely loss of that generally-lamented friend, the genial Hugh Spottiswoode. I would that the tale ended here, but our teaching staff has not escaped similar deprivations. Mr. Richard Cummings, a trusted old friend and professor, was suddenly taken from us while engaged on the work of the Associated Board in Ireland, and is sincerely mourned by his many colleagues and pupils. And yet another deplorable gap in our ranks—nay, in the British world of music—was made when George Martin died. Personal friends as we were —long before we dreamed of holding responsible music positions in London—it is difficult for me to speak of the universally-beloved organist of St. Paul's. His is truly an enviable record of highly artistic service and manly worth. A few words more, and this doleful page shall be turned. The name of an ex-student, whose unswervingly loyal activities in the interests of his Alma Mater were proverbial, must in gratitude be recorded, since he was an exceptionally-marked example of that none to common virtue himself. Enthusiasm is rare enough ; unselfish enthusiasm still more so. And many musical societies have much reason to cherish the memory of Stanley Hawley. It was entirely owing to his attachment to us that Mrs. Maude Drinan's benevolent thoughts

were directed to the Academy. But these matters belong to the smaller consideration he had on our regard; a better friend was never lost.

With a sigh of relief we may close this all-too-long record of losses. But before I turn to the immediate cause of our meeting, let me remind you that the School has been honoured in the selection of a distinguished past student and present professor as the new Organist of St. Paul's. Mr. Charles Macpherson (Applause) already fills his late master's place with the skill and knowledge we all know him to possess in a very high degree; and as the further choice of the new Assistant-Organist has fallen upon yet another talented pupil and professor, Dr. Stanley Marchant (Applause)—well, we can only sincerely congratulate the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral upon its sagacious discernment. (Laughter and applause.) They know where to come. So far from needing to curtail either quantity or quality of our public appearances, these were too few to permit the inclusion of many performers who desired and well-deserved to have been presented. On that head, a few words to the students themselves. I sometimes wonder whether it is sufficiently understood and realised by all the students in the various departments that the members of the large orchestra are not only mainly responsible for the success of the Concerts given in this hall, but are subjected to the greatest number of weekly rehearsals, and consequent expenditure of their own equally precious leisure for practice and study which is so ungrudgingly and persistently given up on behalf of you, their fellows. Probably not; but so it is. And I would like to acknowledge the good work, interest, and constant attendance of the orchestra. (Applause.) During a long winter, in spite of dark streets and other occasionally rather scaring inconveniences (Laughter), it was to be found, with invariable regularity, on its platform. (Applause.)

Opera being, alas, out of the question at present, our little theatre is in the sole possession of the dramatic class. Grown to large proportions of late, under Mr. Acton Bond's zealous and vigorous direction, it has made admirable use of its opportunities in Shakespeare's Commemoration year. In the great dramatist's time women, as you may remember, were completely banned from the boards. But—*O tempora, O mores!*—with a couple of notable exceptions the long lists of male characters in "The Two Gentlemen of Verona" and "Much Ado about Nothing" were

monopolised by them. (Laughter.) And so clever the disguised speech and bearing on these four occasions that—I am not sure whether I have got the adage quite correctly—it would have been "A wise father that knew his own child." (Laughter.) It will be conceded that to produce two such exacting plays satisfactorily, and with the understanding they demand, is no mean feat on the part of the director and his class; but this assuredly was successfully done, and was a source of general congratulation. What future possibilities and surprises lie in wait for us in these newer directions one may not speculate upon. Did we not witness but a week ago, in our own hall, a ballet (Laughter) performed by Madame La Foy's class to lively music composed by a learned F.R.A.M. who persists in concealing his identity? (Renewed laughter.) These gracefully-executed evolutions would have staggered our predecessors! But we must keep step, march and dance with the times; and it would be difficult to name a subject necessary to a complete musical or dramatic education now left unprovided for.

Probably there are very few among our young friends who have not ventured upon shrewd guesses as to what these tables may have in store for them, and quite settled to their own satisfaction what they really ought to receive. The moment approaches when excusable and natural curiosity must be definitely relieved. I am personally answerable for a single adjudication, but it is one which causes me to ponder and perpend deeply, because the Dove Prize has, in course of time, come to be considered as a sort of D.S.O. here, and rightly so, seeing that it can only be awarded to that student who has satisfied the rather wide claims of general excellence among a large number. On this occasion it will be given to one who would, in common orchestral parlance, be called a "double-handed" musician. Young as she is, she has already become known beyond our walls as an accomplished violinist. But besides possessing the highest certificate as a pianist, she has also developed very tuneful and amiable gifts as a composer. One might also add, gifts as an amiable composer—the two qualities do not necessarily accompany each other—because her constant readiness to take part in the numerous instances when her help on the platform is called for has also influenced my selection considerably; and I am sure that cordial congratulations will be received by Miss Winifred Small. (Loud applause.) This happens

to be the only surprise-packet I have to open to-day, for if memory still holds her seat, this is the first occasion upon which I have not been privileged to announce some welcome addition to our Scholarships, Prizes, or Funds. I can only offer you war fare, this being one of my non-meat days. For that there need hardly be any cause for either regret or wonder, when so much that is more immediately important presses heavily upon public and private generosity; and the frequent proofs of liberality which the Institution has hitherto received at the hands of well-wishers give all reasonable hope that it will be similarly remembered and supported when happier times are granted again. In the Mark-Tapleyan spirit of optimism you may even be disposed to view the removal of the Government Grant from the Music Schools as a well-meant and encouraging compliment to their amazing powers of self-reliance. (Laughter.) Whether—but I see that some further remarks on that subject have been censored, and I will say no more. (Laughter.)

What little remains may be quickly told. Particular mention is due to a timely contribution of £60 to the Students' Aid Fund *viâ* Miss Annie Child's public recital by the members of her elocution classes, as that all-too-limited source of help is obviously of more urgent use than ever before. Running dry, as it was, an anticipatory dip into the late Mrs. Drinan's gift—which, by-the-way, has not yet reached us—had to be ventured upon in order to serve some of the most deserving claims for assistance. And in thanking those who spoke to such good purpose, be it said that a new section—that of Elocution—has been called for and added to the future Metropolitan examinations. A similar wish has also been met with regard to tests in pianoforte accompaniment. I must not forget that the Academy congratulates itself upon having just furnished the winner—educated since childhood under its wing—of the much-coveted Mendelssohn Scholarship, the highest prize our art has to offer, in the form of a clever student whom you all know—Philip Lèvi. (Applause.)

In September last, the announced arrangements for the education of children were completed, and a number of bright little bodies may now be seen flitting about among those more sedate and graver students. (Laughter.) In these few months the new scheme has already produced somewhat remarkable results, since on several charitable occasions the entire programmes have been

supplied by these youthful musicians with that enviable confidence which a happy ignorance of the meaning of the word "nerves" insures. (Laughter.) Some of us—their elders—are, unfortunately, more fully informed. But away altogether from the subject of the junior department, and speaking from personal experience, the number of exceptionally young folk with whose precocious talent we are in daily contact, is as surprising as the responsibility of bending and training them in a healthy and sane direction is great and imperative. My own convictions regarding certain sickly, thoroughly anti-British tendencies, now in deplorable vogue, are so positive, and have been so frequently expressed—not yet too often—in and out of the Academy that they need not be reiterated. There need be no minimising of the value of what is already much more than a mere distant promise. Believe me, home talent abounds, and in a very remarkable degree. This is a real fact which should bring pleasure and pride to all those who are not, as Rosalind puts it, "out of love with their own nativity."

Now we have an intimate friend and benefactress here, to whom we are deeply indebted for a host of generous actions. As to the past, all I can trust myself to say just now is that the memory of her dear and good husband is never-fading in the Academy he loved so well. (Applause.) Always in close touch, Mrs. Threlfall has indeed in every sense been "one of us" for many years; and that her active interest remains undiminished is again shown by her kindness in so readily granting the request to preside over this our ninety-third annual meeting. (Applause.) You heard some ancient Scottish music at the beginning of the programme, and it reminded me that, for "Auld lang syne's" sake alone, her coming would have been gratefully appreciated. But we prefer to think of the many future occasions upon which, it is to be hoped, we can offer her the cordial welcome she deserves from us all. (Applause.) Now, after a salute in the grand old chivalrous manner, I shall ask Mrs. Threlfall to come on to the platform and receive the cheerful greeting of the students. (Loud applause.)

The "Grand Salute" was then given by the Misses Hilda Dederich and Gwendolyn Russell (two members of the Fencing Class), after which Mrs. Threlfall was escorted to the platform, and distributed the prizes, certificates, and medals to the students.

Sir Edward E. Cooper (Chairman of the Committee of Management), at the conclusion of the ceremony, said: Ladies and Gentlemen,—I have for many years had the privilege of proposing a

vote of thanks to the distributor of the prizes to our students. As I told you last year, during those many years I have asked you to give your thanks to Princes, Princesses, and Queens of Song, but among them all there has never been one who has been a more generous contributor to, or has a greater affection for, the Royal Academy of Music than the lady who has presented the prizes to-day. (Applause.) Sir Alexander Mackenzie has referred to the fact that the name of Threlfall has long been associated with the Royal Academy of Music, and though the name of Thomas Threlfall will always live and be green in the memories of those who knew him and have survived him, still, when we have passed away, the magnificent organ which Mrs. Threlfall has presented to the Royal Academy of Music in the Duke's Hall will serve to keep alive the memory of him who was so keen and so solicitous in regard to all that the Academy wanted. I need say nothing more, but I ask you to give your most cordial thanks to Mrs. Threlfall for so kindly distributing the prizes to-day. (Applause.)

Mr. R. H. Horton-Smith, K.C. (Vice-President): Ladies and Gentlemen—On behalf of the Directors, I beg to second the vote of thanks to Mrs. Threlfall which Sir Edward Cooper has proposed, and I ask you to uphold it with the greatest cordiality. Mrs. Threlfall is a great friend of our Academy, and, as Sir Edward Cooper has reminded you, she was the giver of the fine organ which adorns the Duke's Hall in our new building, and to that evidence of her interest in the Institution she has added the kindness of coming here to-day to distribute the prizes. It may seem a very small thing to sit in a chair and hand out a certain number of prizes, but because it is a small thing it is not necessarily an easy one to do; to perform the ceremony acceptably, it wants that added grace which Mrs. Threlfall has provided. I beg to second the proposal that we give a hearty vote of thanks to Mrs. Threlfall for coming here to-day. (Applause.)

The motion was carried with acclamation, and Mrs. Threlfall bowed her acknowledgments.

The proceedings terminated with the singing of "God save the King," and, as Mrs. Threlfall, accompanied by the members of the Governing Bodies, left the platform, she was again loudly cheered.

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